

Reference bill number : HB 6824 the Governor's Budget

Dear Sen. Bye, Rep. Walker and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Please consider funding for New Britain to be of utmost importance! Flat funding is not good enough.

The Boe is advocating for some of those additional dollars to be equitably distributed across educational systems with a focus on Priority School Districts. Over the past five years funding for Charters and Magnets have increased by 68% while funding for local public schools have increased by 8% during that same time period. These silos of academic offerings have grown in response to the Sheff settlement with the purpose being to reduce racial, ethnic and socioeconomic isolation. Has it worked? New Britain is viewed as a " suburb" in the context of the Sheff decision. I argue that the principles of Sheff should be viewed as a statewide goal applying to all school districts.

Facts: ECS formula which is suppose to include multiple factors such as student poverty has been frozen at an arbitrary level. In other words - it is not being applied.

To maintain a status quo system for next year, we need a \$5.3 million increase. This accounts for contractual increases in both employee salary/benefits and other services as well as facility upkeep/utilities.

In 2013 -14 New Britain was ranked 157 th in per pupil expenditures at \$12,842 - while the State average was \$15,180 and our DRG I average was \$16,027. Within our DRG four cities receive a higher per pupil allocation - Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Windham. It is true that the State funds two thirds of our budget - however, our students are among the neediest children in the State. They need more. Equity is not everyone receiving the same ...it is receiving what you need....our children, the majority of whom come from poverty ( free/reduced lunch approx.79-80% ) need more not less. We must be properly equipped to close the achievement gap ( opportunity gap, accessibility gap, resource gap). We need to lower class size, increase support for Tier II and Tier III students, offer more children extended day/extended year and wrap around services.

Now our circumstances are not all dire - the State is still discussing mandating All Day Kindergarten - which is something we have accomplished and sustained for years! The State is talking about school resource officers and Mou's with local police departments which we have already done. Secondary education reform and increased credit requirement - done!

Aggressively Addressing chronic absenteeism and closely monitoring attendance - doing it!

Creatively tackling the issue of under credited high school students - Satellite Academy.

Whether you agree with the Common Core or not it is the State's adopted standards and staff have done a yeoman's job developing curriculum and securing textbooks aligned to these standards. We have successfully worked with our local government to provide resources - a two year City bond authorization that allowed the Boe to purchase new text books and provide classroom technology throughout the district and a previous increase ( 2013-14) in local contribution by \$4 million.

Putting our plea for an additional \$5.3 million (to fund status quo ) in perspective - based on 10,500 students- that dollar amount equates to increasing our expenditures by \$ 476 per student per year or \$2.64 per student per day.

What we lack in sufficient resources is partially mitigated by the sheer determination and dedication of our people!

Susan Ehr, Teacher  
Vance Village  
860-225-8731  
[ehr@csdnb.org](mailto:ehr@csdnb.org)